LSC - AQIP OVERVIEW
February, 2014

Introduction

"AQIP" is an acronym for Academic Quality Improvement Program. It is an alternative Higher Learning Commission accreditation process that follows a seven year cycle. We are currently in year six, which means we are in the initial stages of the review leading up to reaffirmation of our accreditation next year.

Core Processes

There are seven core processes in AQIP: (1) Action Projects, (2) Annual Updates, (3) Systems Portfolios, (4) Systems Appraisals, (5) Strategy Forums, (6) Quality Checkups, and (7) Reaffirmation of Accreditation. Here is a brief description of each process and the status of our compliance with each:

Action Projects: At any given time all AQIP institutions are required to have at least 3 active Action Projects. Action Projects are intended to "strengthen an organization's commitment to continuous improvement, educate and motivate faculty, staff, and administrators; and improve systems and processes that lead to success in achieving organization goals." (Higher Learning Commission, "Introduction to AQIP" at p.8)

We currently have four active action projects:

1. Comprehensive Online Teacher Training - A new training program for faculty focused on technology and the pedagogy of online teaching was piloted in the summer of 2012 and expanded in 2013. This AQIP Action Project is expanding and institutionalizing the training.

2. Sustainable Twin Ports - Early Adopter Project - LSC participated in the Sustainable Twin Ports Early Adopter Project, a process of comprehensive and strategic training in sustainability. This Action Project is complete and will be closed out in the near future.

3. Data Integrity - This Action Project has focused its attention on improving our data and developing a better understanding of its limitations. Among other things, work on a glossary of LSC data-related terms is nearly complete.

4. Process Improvement - This Action Project is tackling the challenge of documenting and improving LSC's processes. One hoped for outcome of the project will be a formal method for choosing and conducting process improvement reviews.

Annual Updates: These are short reports, filed each fall, on the progress or completion of our Action Projects. Our updates are current.

Systems Portfolio: The Systems Portfolio is a 125 page document in which we answer specific questions about our processes, results, and improvement for each of the nine AQIP categories. The nine categories are:

1. Helping Students Learn
2. Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives
3. Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs
4. Valuing People
5. Leading and Communicating
6. Supporting Institutional Operations
7. Measuring Effectiveness
8. Planning Continuous Improvement
9. Building Collaborative Relationships

Status: Our most recent Systems Portfolio update was submitted in November, 2013. (More about our Portfolio in next week's update.)

Systems Appraisal: The Systems Appraisal is the Higher Learning Commission's review of our Systems Portfolio. We receive a Systems Appraisal Feedback Report that identifies our institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement within each of the nine AQIP categories several months after submitting our Systems Portfolio.

Status: Our most recent Systems Appraisal Feedback Report is dated February 6, 2014. We received it last Friday.

Strategy Forum: A Strategy Forum is an intensive, four-day, facilitated peer review process designed to help institutions identify a set of strategies to drive quality improvement within the AQIP Categories that are most vital to the institution at the time.

Status: Our most recent Strategy Forum was April, 2012 in Chicago.

Quality Checkup: This is a site visit by two or more trained evaluators who spend at least two days on campus to review relevant documentation and verify compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. The evaluators produce a written report.

Status: Our Quality Checkup is scheduled for April 2-4, 2014.

Reaffirmation of Accreditation: An AQIP Reaffirmation Panel at HLC will examine our current Systems Portfolio, Action Projects, Systems Appraisals, Quality Checkup Report and all other relevant materials for evidence of satisfactory compliance with each of the Criteria for Accreditation.

Status: Our next scheduled Reaffirmation of Accreditation is scheduled for 2014-15.